

Message Text

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TO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 214990

FOLLOWING REPEAT VIENNA 8297 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BELGRADE
ROME USUN 26 SEPT

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 8297

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, AU

SUBJECT: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN SLOVENE MINORITY
ISSUE IN AUSTRIA

REF: VIENNA A-267 OF MAY 31, 1974

1. SUMMARY: SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE, UNRESOLVED AND
ON BACK BURNER IN RECENT MONTHS, SUDDENLY TOOK ON NEW
URGENCY IN WAKE OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT SEP. 24 OF
SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP WITHDRAWAL FROM FURTHER
TALKS WITH AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT AND OF REPORTED STRONG
YUGOSLAV DEMARCHE ON SAME DAY TO GOA ON CONTROVERSY.
THESE TWO MOVES WERE PRECIPITATED BY RECENT AGREEMENT
AMONG AUSTRIA'S THREE POLITICAL PARTIES IN NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY THAT AS PRECONDITION TO EXTENSION OF FULL
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MINORITY RIGHTS TO SLOVENES IN CARINTHIA, ESPECIALLY

REGARDING ERECTION OF BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS, CENSUS OF A SPECIAL NATURE (NOT FURTHER EXPLAINED) WOULD BE NECESSARY. LOW KEY INITIAL GOA REACTION TO SLOVENE COUNTERMOVES AIMED AT KEEPING ISSUE FROM GETTING OUT OF HAND AS WAS CASE IN FALL 1972. AT SAME TIME GOA APPEARS STILL DETERMINED TO TRY OVERCOME FEARS OF SLOVENE MINORITY AND ITS YUGOSLAV SUPPORTERS CONCERNING DESIRABILITY OF SUGGESTED CENSUS. END SUMMARY

2. SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS IN CARINTHIA ANNOUNCED SEP. 24 THEIR DECISION TO SUSPEND FURTHER TALKS WITH MEMBERS OF AUSTRIAN FEDERAL AND CARINTHIAN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES ON EFFECTUATING FULL EXERCISE OF MINORITY RIGHTS BY SLOVENES. DECISION BY SLOVENE REPRESENTATIVES EXPLAINED AS BASED ON CONCLUSION THAT IN VIEW OF PAST EXPERIENCES AND ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF MINORITY CENSUS PROJECT, "PREREQUISITES FOR FURTHER COOPERATION IN CONTACT COMMITTEE NO LONGER EXIST".

3. IN APPARENT COORDINATED MOVE, YUGOSLAV MFA CALLED IN AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE SEP. 24, ACCORDING TO AUSTRIAN PRESS, TO REGISTER STRONG PROTEST AGAINST PROPOSAL TO CARRY OUT SLOVENE MINORITY CENSUS IN CARINTHIA. AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR WAS INFORMED THAT MINORITY CENSUS, IF ATTEMPTED, WOULD CONFLICT WITH SPIRIT OF AUSTRIAN STATE TREATY (ARTICLE 7) SINCE TREATY OBLIGATES AUSTRIA TO EXTEND TO SLOVENE AND CROAT GROUPS FULL MINORITY RIGHTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR NUMERICAL STRENGTH. GOY DEMAGCHE REPORTEDLY ALSO NOTED THAT ANY AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT DECISION TO UNDERTAKE SUCH CENSUS WOULD "NOT CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING CONFIDENCE BETWEEN YUGOSLAV AND AUSTRIAN PEOPLES."

4. VIENNA PRESS SEP. 26 NOTED AUSTRIAN FONMIN BIELKA AND YUGOSLAV FONMIN MINIC, IN MEETING IN NEW YORK SEP. 24, ALSO DISCUSSED MINORITY ISSUE. MINIC REPORTEDLY DID NOT MAKE FORMAL PROTEST BUT SAID THAT AUSTRIA'S FULFILLMENT OF CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS RESULTING FROM STATE TREATY AND OTHER AGREEMENTS WAS CONSIDERED OVERDUE

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BY YUGOSLAVIA. CHANCELLOR KREISKY'S OFFICE, IN LOW KEY REACTION TO YUGOSLAV COMPLAINTS, ASSERTED SEP. 25 THAT YUGOSLAVIA HAD OBVIOUSLY MISUNDERSTOOD REASONS FOR ENVISAGED MINORITY CENSUS SINCE CENSUS WOULD IN FACT BE "INSTRUMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES SERVING INTERESTS OF SLOVENES."

COMMENT: MAIN PARTIES TO CONTROVERSY SEEM TO HAVE

ADOPTED IRRECONCILABLE POSITIONS FOR AND
AGAINST SPECIAL CENSUS. ACTION OF AUSTRIAN SLOVENES
AND THEIR SUPPORTERS WILL PROBABLY FORCE GOA TO MAKE
EARLY ATTEMPT AT SOLUTION OF ISSUE RATHER THAN, AS
HAD HERETOFORE BEEN EXPECTED, TRY TO MANAGE ISSUE
UNTIL AFTER JUNE 1975 NATIONAL ELECTIONS. INITIAL
GOA REACTION TO LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON ISSUE DESIGNED
TO PREVENT PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, ALTHOUGH THIS MAY
NOT BE POSSIBLE SINCE SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP HAS
ANNOUNCED PUBLIC RALLY OCT 6 IN SUPPORT THEIR
OPPOSITION TO CENSUS AND AUSTRO-GERMAN NATIONALISTS
CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXPRESS PUBLICLY THEIR FEELINGS
ON OCT. 10, ANNIVERSARY OF POST WORLD WAR I PLEBISCITE
IN SOUTHERN CARINTHIA. FONOFF SOURCES HAVE PRIVATELY
EXPRESSED TO EMBASSY THEIR CONCERN OVER MOST RECENT
TURN OF EVENTS AND ARE URGING GOVERNMENT TO MAKE
MAXIMUM EFFORT TO REALIZE SOLUTION TO ISSUE AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE, IN VIEW OF UNCERTAINTY OVER FUTURE
COURSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA FOLLOWING TITO'S
DEATH. HUMES UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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